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JOURNEY TO MODERNITY:
THE IDEOLOGY OF CHINESE DETECTIVE FICTION

BY

CLEMENT HO

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

IN

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND COMPARATIVE STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Journey to Modernity: The Ideology of Chinese Fiction submitted by Clement Ho in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Comparative Literature.

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Date....Dec. 16/95.....

ABSTRACT

Inasmuch as the hero of traditional Chinese detective fiction or *kung-an* was the investigating magistrate, who acted as the representative and agent of the emperor, the ideology of many of the *kung-an* stories was intimately tied to that of the state. The emphasis of these stories was on the maintenance of social order and harmony. In Western detective fiction and particularly as exemplified in the Sherlock Holmes stories, on the other hand, the hero is the private detective. Justice in these stories stands as independent of the actions of the state. Inspired by the example of the Western detective, the writer Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing created the character of Huo Sang, the self-titled Chinese Sherlock Holmes. This paper examines the ways in which the Huo Sang stories are similar to or differ from traditional Chinese detective fiction and the Sherlock Holmes stories they seek to emulate. We conclude that despite its conservative nature, which it shared with other popular literature such as the writings of the so-called Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School, the Huo Sang stories promoted certain aspects of modernity that were also espoused by the literature of the May Fourth Movement.

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INTRODUCTION

In her analytical overview of the role Sherlock Holmes plays in Victorian fiction, Rosemary Jann defines ideology as "the power to present one's own values as part of the neutral backdrop of reality, to construct a vision so compelling that it is difficult to imagine alternative worlds."[1] It follows that the world reproduced by the authors appears natural. The ideology that pervades fiction encompasses the cultural myths of a society, the assumptions that tie a society together. As Dennis Porter writes:

> While we seem to be taking only innocent pleasure in our popular readings, we are always at the same time inserted into a cultural value system. That is to say, whenever we learn to read, we learn not only how to decipher rows of words but also to accept at least in part the authority of the book. And the book reproduces the authority of the social order itself in its apparent coherence and naturalness.[2]

The social and formal attributes of fiction are particularly conducive to examining the ideological principles that undergird societies, and this is especially true of crime fiction. The outstanding characteristic of crime fiction is, after all, the social relationship that surrounds law and order. Dennis Porter points out that the concept of crime exists only within the framework of society.

> A crime always occurs in a community. It is by definition an antisocial act committed by one member of a human group against the group as a whole or another member of the group. As long as he remained alone on his island, Robinson Crusoe could commit no crimes, although he could continue to sin. Consequently, a crime implies the violation of a community code of conduct and demands a response in terms of the code. It always depends on a legal definition, and the law, as both Gramsci and

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[1] Rosemary Jann, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Social Order* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995) 70.

[2] Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 121.

> Althusser make clear, is a key element of the superstructure in ensuring the reproduction of the existing power relations in a society. As a result, in representing crime and its punishment, whether evoked or merely anticipated, detective novels invariably project the image of a given social order and the implied value system that helps sustain it.[3]

Stories about crime inevitably highlight issues about the role of individuals within society and the maintenance of social order. Equally important, they focus on the concept of justice and its role within the community.

Popular literature especially, because it tends to be formulaic, provides easier access to the dominant social ideology of a society. Unlike literature as art (high literature), popular literature, commonly classified as "escapist," is seldom intended to confront or to provoke the audience[4] and is therefore more transparent. Entertainment rather than edification is often the sole purpose of this type of fiction. Therefore, low literature tends to be less critical of the established orthodoxy. Moreover, its appeal is to a large segment of the population, often without education or the critical acumen to analyze the underlying message of the text. Indeed, in some cases the authors themselves lack the ability to adequately analyze the ideological substructure of the society being depicted.

Crime fiction in China has a rich tradition that dates back nearly a millennium. This tradition takes the form of the "court case" or *kung-an* (*gong'an*)公案 where the judicial solution is of central importance. While the *kung-an*, like Western detective

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[3] Porter, 120-121.

[4] One noteable exception is pornographic literature, which often has as one of its aims to shock and disturb the reader.

fiction, was highly formulaic, it differed in important respects in both structure and ideology. The typical Chinese detective story, in some ways resembling the standard melodrama or the hard-boiled detective story, reflects the Chinese judicial system at work. The central figure is that of the judge or magistrate. Under the traditional Chinese judicial system, the judge serves in multiple capacities: investigator, interrogator, prosecutor, judge and overseer of executions. Since he represents the government, the implementation of justice, which is conceived as carrying out the state's orders, is directly linked to the power of government. On the other hand, the characteristic Western detective story is a "whodunit," in which the person who solves the mystery is a private detective acting independently of the state and often conceiving justice as lying outside the state's command. The person who solves the mystery is the private detective. Its exemplary representative is Sherlock Holmes.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a new openness in China toward foreign ideas, particularly those of the West. China's political and military decline was thought by many to have been brought on by the traditional values that the Chinese had upheld for centuries. With the aim of rejuvenating Chinese culture, a segment of Chinese society eagerly embraced Western ideas. However, translation of Western texts often was haphazard, skipping some of the West's greatest works. Indeed, the majority of texts which came to be translated and those most popular with Chinese audiences belonged to what we would call low literature and often included Western detective fiction, particularly the stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. The popularity of Sherlock Holmes soon inspired Chinese imitators, among whom the most successful was

Huo Sang 霍桑, the self-styled "Chinese Sherlock Holmes."

This paper will examine the gulf between the traditional Chinese detective story and the new whodunit as exemplified in the Huo Sang stories. In so doing we will try to assess the significance of the shift in the literary paradigm of crime fiction. Does this change of paradigm reflect a deeper change in Chinese society and Chinese attitudes toward law and justice? The Huo Sang stories provide an insight into the manner by which the genre of Western detective fiction was adopted and adapted by the Chinese for local consumption. This process clearly demonstrates one aspect of the Westernization of China which took place in the first quarter of the twentieth century and indicates how Western ideas penetrated the emerging Chinese middle class.

This thesis is divided into three sections. The first presents the conventions and characteristics associated with the traditional Chinese detective story. The second section will examine the ideology underlying Western detective fiction as seen in its most popular form, the Sherlock Holmes mystery, and will compare it with the Chinese model. Finally, we will examine how Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing 程小青, the author of the Huo Sang stories, has adopted the Western formula and adapted it to Chinese conditions, and we will contrast his stories with the literature of the May Fourth Movement.

CHAPTER I

TRADITIONAL CHINESE DETECTIVE FICTION: THE *KUNG-AN* STORY

The Chinese *kung-an* or "court case" tradition, which featured a judge acting as master-detective, dates back to the middle of the Northern Sung period (960-1127). There are two main streams to the tradition: the courtroom drama which flowered during the Yuan dynasty, exploiting the dramatic potential of the courtroom scene, and the fictional story which has its roots in the oral storytelling tradition. This tradition can be further subdivided into short tales which reached their zenith during the latter part of the Ming dynasty and the longer novel which dates to about 1600 and become most popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A clear demarcation among these various forms is impossible since they often borrowed from each other, often using the same plots and plot devices. The popularity of the *kung-an* coincided with the flourishing of publications that catered to an audience of the semi- and newly-literate. This tradition of crime fiction is not associated with any one author; the stories that have survived are typically anonymous, having gone through a process of freely copying, compiling, and editing.

The oral storytelling roots of *kung-an* fiction--indeed, of Chinese novels in general--is apparent in its form. The *kung-an* typically includes poetic insertions, while each chapter ends as a cliffhanger accompanied by the statement: "If you want to know what happens next, you will have to read the next chapter." Moreover, the narrator of the tale would often address the reader directly and add asides.

The formula of the genre is intimately tied to a description of the legal system.

The *kung-an* serves as an excellent demonstration of the Chinese legal process at work. Although there are *kung-an* stories that are "whodunits," they are isolated and reflect no continuous development; as such, they cannot be regarded as constituting a genre.[5] The vast majority of *kung-an* stories follow a similar pattern:[6]

1. a criminal commits a crime;
2. the crime is reported or discovered;
3. the wrong man is apprehended;
4. an official arrives to investigate. The official then seeks out the real criminal and is sometimes provided with supernatural help, (e.g. the dead victim identifies the murderer);
5. the criminal is severely punished;
6. the wronged man is compensated (sometimes with official honors). The narrator praises the official's judiciousness and hands out a moral warning to the readers.

Since we already know who the criminals are at the beginning of the story, the emphasis is not on linking the individual to the crime nor does it lie in the criminal's motivation. In fact, criminals in Chinese stories tend to be fairly predictable. All the characters exist in a melodramatic world where they are cast as either good or bad. There

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[5] Wilt Lukas Idema, "The Mystery of the Halved Judge Dee Novel: The Anonymous *Wu Tse-T'ien ssu-ta ch'i-an* and Its Partial Translation by R.H. van Gulik," *Tamkang Review* 8.1 (April 1977): 158.

[6] Gilbert Chee Fun Fong, "Time in *Nine Murders*: Western Influence and Domestic Tradition," *The Chinese Novel at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 124-125.

is little or no individual characterization or character development and the motives seldom go beyond greed, lust, and power. Among the usual culprits are Buddhist and Taoist monks, who are almost always depicted as lecherous and greedy, adulterous wives, eunuchs, and powerful members of the aristocracy. The victims are usually young scholars or students and virtuous wives.[7]

Rather than identifying the culprit, the main concern of the *kung-an* stories centers around the relationship between the criminal deed and its consequences.[8] Insofar as the stories are about the investigation, apprehension, and punishment of the criminals involved, the primary concern of the narrative is the unfolding of the criminal process. The treatment of the plot, however, is such that the point of view of the government is the only one offered.

At the center of the legal process is the district magistrate or judge. The judge in the *kung-an* represents the state. He is the agent of the emperor and executes his orders and enforces the law in his name. The magistrate is usually the only representative of the state with which the ordinary person has direct contact. He heads the administration of the local government, implements imperial edicts and ordinances, and maintains social order and the law.[9] Of all the judge-heroes, the most famous and the one most commonly

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[7] See Yau-Woon Ma, "Themes and Characterization in the *Lung-t'u kung-an*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 35 (1975): 190-220.

[8] Ma, "Themes" 200.

[9] For an interesting first-hand account of the numerous duties and problems facing a district magistrate during the early period of the Ch'ing dynasty, see Huang Liu-Hung, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence (Fu-hui ch'üan-shu): A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China*, trans. and ed. Djang Chu (Tucson:

associated with *kung-ans* is Judge Pao or Pao Kung 包公. According to Jeffrey Kinkley, Judge Pao is as evocative and seminal a figure in Chinese literature as is Hamlet or Richard III.[10]

The historical Judge Pao, whose real name is Pao Cheng 包拯, and whose courtesy name is Hsi-jen 希仁 (999-1062) was an official of the Northern Sung dynasty.[11] He served in various capacities in the government bureaucracy: as magistrate of several districts including the capital K'ai-feng; as political censor charged with the weeding out of political corruption (1056-1058); and as fiscal minister. Little is actually known about his life beyond sketchy details of his career offered in a few sources, including the *Sung Shih* 宋史 [History of the Sung Dynasty]. This lack of biographical data has served to encourage storytellers to offer ever more fanciful inventions about his life. It is, however, known that during his lifetime he acquired a reputation for sternness and was famous as a wise judge, fearless and incorruptible, and a champion of the common people. For example, during his tenure at the capital city of K'ai-feng, it is reputed that he was presented with a series of cases where the culprits were politically powerful members of the court and even members of the royal family, whom he prosecuted nonetheless. It was

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University of Arizona Press, 1984).

[10] Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "Judge Bao, Detective," *Armchair Detective: A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Appreciation of Mystery, Detective, and Suspense Fiction* 21.1 (Winter 1988): 41.

[11] For more on the biography of Judge Pao, see chapter two in George A. Hayden, *Crime and Punishment in Medieval Chinese Drama: Three Judge Pao Plays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1978); and chapter one in Yau-Woon Ma, "The Pao-kung Tradition in Chinese Popular Literature," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1971.

these qualities which contributed to his becoming an enduring character in popular fiction and drama. Despite embellishments to his legend, the severe justness of his character, his wisdom, his uncompromising honesty, and his sympathy for the poor always remain integral to his fictional character. The strength of these traits were such that they have become the stock features of every master-judge of traditional Chinese detective fiction. Thus, all the famous judges in *kung-an*s, Judge Pao, Judge Shih 施公 , Judge P'eng 彭公 and Judge Ti (Dee 狄), are all almost interchangeable.

During the last fifty years of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a number of stories featuring Judge Pao were collated and published. This compilation was devoted exclusively to Judge Pao's exploits. The collection entitled *Lung-t'u kung-an* 龍圖公案 was especially instrumental in furthering his popularity, so much so that Jeffrey Kinkley writes: "[Judge Pao] loomed so large in the public mind that stories originally about other famous judges were assimilated to his tradition."[12]

One aspect of the figure of Judge Pao is that of the wise judge, a Solomon. In fact, one of his cases, "The Chalk Circle" is the same as that of Solomon and the baby claimed by two mothers.[13] Pao's role, however, is not limited to identifying and apprehending the criminal. He must further see that justice is carried out. This becomes a great problem when the criminals are politically powerful and well-connected. One of the most popular themes, and one especially associated with Judge Pao, concerns culprits who

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[12] Kinkley, "Judge Bao" 41.

[13] Sidney Shapiro. *The Law and Lore of Chinese Criminal Justice* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1990) 56-71.

assume that due to their position they are immune from the law. In these cases the interest of the story lies in how Judge Pao brings these high-born criminals to justice. For example, in the story "Lion Cub Lane," no detection is in fact required. Judge Pao is early made aware of the identity of the culprits; the challenge lies in actually bringing them to justice since they are brothers-in-law of the emperor. Their crimes include ordering the murder of a young scholar and his infant son and the kidnapping and attempted murder of his wife. Inasmuch as the full range of government powers are not available to him, Judge Pao must rely on his cunning and shrewdness to devise a stratagem which would bring the culprits to justice. Unlike Western detective fiction, logical deduction does not play a crucial role in the *kung-an*. The world of the *kung-an* is more akin to that of hard-boiled detective fiction in that it is a violent world and the inhabitants are motivated by passion and feeling. There are very few crimes in the *kung-an* committed as a consequence of carefully laid plans of the sort for which Professor Moriarty of the Sherlock Holmes stories was so famous.[14]

Judge Pao's methods in achieving a just ending to a crime might well appear questionable to Western readers. For example, in the story "Lion Cub Lane," from the *Lung-t'u kung-an*,[15] he holds the elder Imperial Brother Ts'ao as virtual hostage and forges a letter to trick the younger Ts'ao to return to the capital. Other examples include his framing a condemned criminal for a crime he did not commit ("The Butterfly Dream"),

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[14] Ma, "Themes" 200.

[15] "Lion Cub Lane," trans. George A. Hayden, eds. Y[au]-W[oo] Ma and Joseph S.M. Lau, *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) 479-484.

lying ("The Tower of Fine Gold"), and falsifying official documents ("Lu Chai-lang").[16]

This fundamental difference in resorting to underhanded methods to bring about a just conclusion is dramatically illustrated in Robert van Gulik's translation of *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*[17] which also illustrates the gulf in ideology in Chinese crime fiction and the classical Western detective story. The original Chinese novel, *Wu Tse-t'ien ssu-ta ch'i-an* 武則天四大奇案 [Four Important and Curious Cases from the Time of Empress Wu] was probably written in the first half of the nineteenth century and, as Idema notes, "is not the hasty compilation by a hack writer of popular stories, but the original composition of a sophisticated author writing for his equals."[18] Idema goes on: "*Wu Tse-t'ien ssu-ta ch'i-an* does not belong to the chapbook tradition in Chinese fiction, but to that of the literary novel written by well-educated members of the gentry . . . even if it occupies only a very small position in that tradition."[19]

The first half of the *Wu Tse-t'ien ssu-ta ch'i-an*, (the first thirty chapters) describes the activities of Judge Dee (Ti Jen-chieh 狄仁傑) as a district magistrate and resembles a Western-style detective story. This section of the novel was translated by van Gulik partly, no doubt, because he thought it would appeal to Western audiences. However, what he omitted from his translation was the second half of the novel (the second thirty-

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[16] Hayden 26.

[17] Gulik, Robert van, tr., *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee (Dee Gong An): An Authentic Eighteenth-Century Chinese Detective Novel* (New York: Dover, 1976).

[18] Idema 159.

[19] Idema 159.

four chapters), which he dismissed as being of inferior quality. Interestingly, it is in this second half that Judge Dee's duties as metropolitan prefect are described and in which he engages in a host of activities which any Western reader would regard as wholly improper. In his efforts to oust the faction of the Empress Wu from power, Dee "becomes a brazen manipulator of facts, evidence and popular opinion, utilizing his reputation as an incorruptible judge to achieve his ends."[20] Nevertheless, Judge Dee's motives are the same as those of Judge Pao in "Lion Cub Lane": "He is led both by his love for the common people and by his loyalty to the dynasty."[21] Indeed, these are the twin pillars upon which the loyalty of the lead protagonists in all *kung-an* fiction rests. And in the furtherance of these ends, any means take on legitimacy.

Ideally, love for the ruler means love for the common people, and vice versa. But in those rare situations where the wishes of the emperor do not coincide with the interest of the people, the official is confronted with a dilemma. But despite such shortcomings of the emperor, the Chinese detective-judge must remain steadfast in his loyalty to the emperor and his dynasty. The dilemma is resolved in the *kung-an* by showing that the conflict is not a real, but only an apparent one. Thus, the imperial brothers-in-law in "Lion Cub Lane" proved to be both a plague on the population and, despite their high birth, a danger to the dynasty. Therefore, Judge Pao, in punishing the Imperial Brothers, was able to fulfil both of his obligations.

The crucial aspect of law and justice in Chinese *kung-an* fiction is the maintenance

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[20] Idema 162.

[21] Idema 163.

of social order. Chinese philosophy regards the opposite of chaos not as order but as harmony. This entails that every member of society fulfil his duties and obligations, which in turn are based on established social relationships. Social status, one's place within the social hierarchy, is the sole determinant of the privileges and duties we each have. As heinous as was their crime against the family of the young scholar, the imperial brothers-in-law were guilty of no less an offence in being presumptuous and extravagant. They had pretensions to privileges that were not legitimately theirs. The most striking example of their claims to unrightful rank was the banner they raised over their doorway which read: "Onlookers will have their eyes gouged out, and whoever points here will lose the hand he pointed with."[22] Indeed, their residence displayed a lavishness and extent unwarranted by their position to the point that Judge Pao exclaimed: "No imperial relative's residence is as enormous as this, and they are nothing but brothers by marriage. Look at the extravagance of this place!"[23]

When the emperor appeals to Judge Pao to spare his brothers-in-law, the judge has the courage to face up to him by reminding him of the responsibilities of rulership. There is nothing in this that contravenes Judge Pao's allegiance to good government and the dynasty, when properly functioning. The principle of the just overthrow of a corrupt emperor had long been established in Chinese philosophy and is contained in the concept of the "Mandate of Heaven" (*t'ien-ming* 天命). Confucian tradition, particularly as it appears in the writings of Mencius and Hsün-tzu, maintains that once a ruler has neglected

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[22] "Lion Cub Lane" 480.

[23] "Lion Cub Lane" 480.

his responsibilities or abused his powers his claim to legitimacy disappears and he may be removed. Hsün-tzu wrote:

> When the country has no real prince, if there is a feudal noble who has ability, and if his virtue is illustrious and his majesty is great, none of the people of the country will be unwilling to take him for prince and leader; then if he should seek out and kill this isolated and wasteful tyrant, he would not injure anyone, he would be a blameless subject. If he put to death a prince of a tyrannous state, it would be the same as killing an ordinary individual.[24]

In "Lion Cub Lane" the Emperor Jen-tsung is depicted as a weak and stumbling ruler, incapable of handling the country's affairs (nor, by implication, can he handle his family's affairs). When the emperor arrives at Judge Pao's tribunal, he is chastised and the judge reprimands him in the following words: "Today is not the day for sacrifice to Heaven and Earth or for encouragement of agriculture; how could you leave the court so casually? This is the omen for a three-year-long drought."[25] And when the emperor expressed a wish to pardon his brothers-in-law, Judge Pao remarks: "All are equal before the law. Why not pardon the whole empire as well?"[26] By wishing to pardon his relatives, the emperor has neglected the welfare of his people in the interest of the welfare of his family. He wishes to pervert the rules of justice to serve his in-laws. Nor are we even sure that Judge Pao is ironic when he suggests to the emperor that if he were to pardon his relatives, he might well consider pardoning all criminals in the empire. For were the emperor to act so contrary to law and so unjustly as to pardon his brothers-in-law, would

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[24] Homer H. Dubs, *The Words of Hsuntze* (London: Probsthain, 1928) 190.

[25] "Lion Cub Lane" 483.

[26] "Lion Cub Lane" 483.

this not imply that all criminals imprisoned throughout the empire had been imprisoned unjustly? And would justice not require that all criminals be treated equally whether or not they were the relatives of the emperor? In thus suggesting an empire-wide pardon, Judge Pao in some respects appears more emperor-like than the emperor--wiser, more resolute, and more morally upright.

Punishment is crucial to the notion of moral uprightness. It is for this reason that when the emperor in fact accepts Judge Pao's suggestion, that all criminals throughout the empire be pardoned, as the only legitimate way of sparing the lives of his brothers-in-law, the judge sees to it that the younger and more guilty of the two brothers is executed before the pardon is proclaimed. It is only through punishment of the guilty that harmony can be restored. This view of the redeeming effect of punishment on the legal order doubtless accounts for why the overwhelming majority of *kung-an* stories depict the punishment of the perpetrator of the crime in gruesome detail. Nothing could be further from Western literary taste than being treated to the minutiae of the more grisly Chinese punishments. It is for this reason that almost all translators have chosen to omit these vivid descriptions.[27]

But punishment alone is not sufficient to fully reestablish social harmony. It is a feature of *kung-an* fiction that the reader is assured that the victim or the victim's family will prosper sufficiently to balance the pain brought on by the suffering brought him. This

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[27] For examples where details of punishment have been excised, see Yin-lien C. Chin, Yetta S. Center, and Mildred Ross, *"The Stone Lion" and Other Chinese Detective Stories: The Wisdom of Lord Bau* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992); and Leon Comber, *The Strange Cases of Magistrate Pao: Chinese Tales of Crime and Detection* (1964; Hong Kong: Heinemann Educational Books [Asia] Ltd., 1972).

most often takes the form of material wealth and social standing such as a son passing an advanced civil examination.

It is interesting to observe that the reestablishment of harmonious social relationships through the action of the judge-master detective, first by discovering the criminal and then by meting out punishment, does not always rely solely on the native intelligence of humans. In most cases, no detection is actually required of the judge. While it may be an exaggeration to claim, as have some critics,[28] that the judge in traditional Chinese crime stories need not be at all intelligent[29] since he is often aided by the supernatural in his investigations, there is an element of truth to this observation. Again, to use "Lion Cub Lane" as an example, the identity of the culprit is made known to Judge Pao by the spirit of the murdered scholar. In fact, in many of the stories, Judge Pao's character undergoes no development. The reader rarely glimpses his mental processes, nor is the judge ever beset by doubts. In this he resembles much more a wrathful god than a man.

In uncovering crime and punishing criminals the judge reestablishes harmony on earth and thus brings the empire more into line with the cosmic order. For a crime committed against society is also an offence against the order of heaven. Doubtless it is for this reason that, beginning in the first half of the thirteenth century, Judge Pao was

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[28] See, for example, Idema.

[29] While the judge-detective might not always rely on pure deductive reasoning, certainly he must display a high level of shrewdness and cunning in bringing the criminal to justice. Thus, the judge-detective is often called upon to solve extremely complex riddles and regularly tricks culprits into confessing their crimes.

endowed with supernatural characteristics. At some point during the Yuan dynasty, Judge Pao appears to have become transmuted into King Yama, the immortal Buddhist judge of dead souls and even today there are temples devoted to him in both mainland China and Taiwan.[30]

Certainly there is a divine aspect in Chinese legal philosophy associated with the notion of redressing wrongs. If justice were merely a matter of preserving civil order, Judge Pao in "Lion Cub Lane" could have obeyed the wishes of the emperor and buried the whole incident or made private restitution for the widow's losses. However, he rebuffed the senior ministers' overtures of compromise because he recognized that the murder of the young scholar and his child demanded retribution. It is for this reason that he took it upon himself to quickly execute the younger Ts'ao regardless of the emperor's pardon.

Supernatural intercessions in the detection and solution of crimes presuppose some spiritual moral dimension. In the same way, *kung-an* stories permit us to view coincidences as manifestations of Heaven's will rather than as convenient narrative devices. There is a Chinese saying: "No book without a coincidence' (*wu-ch'iao bu-ch'eng-shu*)"[31] which attests to the frequency the device is employed in Chinese literature. The large number and gross implausibility of coincidences in traditional vernacular stories have alerted scholars to the deeper significance of the role of chance in reflecting Chinese

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[30] In addition, he also became the Stellar God of Literature. See Kinkley, "Judge Bao" 49.

[31] Quoted by Scott Davis, review of *A Thrice Told Tale...*, by Margery Wolf, *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31 (January 1994): 138.

values. Coincidences are often the manifestation of the divine moral force in order to ensure that no crime goes unpunished. In writing of another genre of popular traditional Chinese fiction, Karl S. Y. Kao observes:

> The use of *coincidence*, often deplored by critics as a sign of ineptness in the construction of realistic narrative, for which the psychological realism in this text barely compensates, must then be understood in a different light. Within this belief system coincidence is not introduced so much for the representational purpose; it is ideologically motivated. In verifying the reality of retribution, coincidences are no more accidental but have a certain causal basis; despite the fact that this causal connection may appear as coincidental to human perception. If one believes in it, as the original audience would, retributional law should never fail to prevail, although it may come in an unexpected time (as the saying has it: *pu shih pu pao, shih-hou wei tao* 不是不報，時候未到). It is a coincidence that is destined.[32]

Perhaps the most important aspect of the judge-detective is the role he plays as a magistrate in the government hierarchy. He traditionally personifies the ideal of a Confucian official, righteous and courageous enough to give unpopular counsel if need be and to look after the welfare of the people. Judge Pao especially embodies the ideology of the Confucian scholar elite. He actively defends the prerogatives of the Confucian class who, interestingly enough, tended to be the compilers of these stories. Their attitude toward class is reflected in the choice of villains in *kung-an* fiction. These are often Buddhist monks, eunuchs and court favorites, all traditional rivals of the Confucian scholar class, who were invariably portrayed as lecherous and corrupt. The defense of the status quo is a constant theme which runs throughout these stories. Morality and legality are often conflated and the reader is commonly treated to an extended moral lesson when

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[32] Karl S. Y. Kao, "Bao and Baoying: Narrative Causality and External Motivation in Chinese Fiction," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 11 (Dec. 1989): 127.

sentence is passed. While the judge-detective is himself part of an extensive bureaucracy, his moral and social standing raise him above those around him. It is this quality of moral uprightness that accounts for Judge Pao's courage in confronting the powerful and well-connected. Conversely, his strict moral standards deprive him of any sense of humor and occasionally make him appear superhuman and godlike.

The judge-detective's stern, almost divine-like, bearing is reflected in his impartiality, which is a common feature of many of the *kung-an* stories. Thus, in "Lion Cub Lane" Judge Pao's reputation for even-handedness is acknowledged even by one of the villains, the elder imperial brother-in-law, who at one point remarks: "He wouldn't hold back even if the emperor himself violated the law, not to mention the empress."[33] Given this aspect of the judge-detective's personality, it is not difficult to see why the *kung-an* was so popular among the great mass of literate Chinese. The incorruptible judge acts in the stories as a symbol of hope and provides to those who lack the financial wherewithal and necessary connections, the only means of protection against the incursions of the powerful, such as imperial bureaucrats and members of the court. This impartiality is exemplified by Judge Pao having accepted the testimony of Yuan's wife, an impoverished widow, over the word of the elder Ts'ao. It therefore comes as no surprise that the less privileged groups in Chinese society comprised the vast majority of the reading audience for *kung-an* stories.

In the same way, the callousness and brutality of the Ts'ao brothers is contrasted with the behavior of the common people who are much more sympathetically delineated.

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[33] "Lion Cub Lane" 481.

Characters such as Old Chang and Granny Wang are decent and kind-hearted; Old Chang saves the life of Yuan's wife despite the order of the younger Ts'ao to throw her into a well. And Chang's kindheartedness extends to giving her money that the master had earlier paid him so that the widow could journey to the capital. Both Chang and Granny Wang have no problems recognizing right from wrong and then acting accordingly, unlike the rich and highborn Ts'aos.

Impartiality, righteousness, courage, all serve to remind the reader of proper moral behavior. The *kung-an*, in addition to being entertaining, also educated the populace about right behavior and the relation between law and order, both central to Chinese political philosophy. In the *kung-an*, if the judge-detective happens, as is occasionally the case, to fail to achieve justice in this world he ensures its attainment in the afterworld, where he serves double duty as god-magistrate. The most dramatic example of this is Judge Pao acting in the capacity of King Yama in the world of the dead. The ultimate victory of justice, which is the message of all *kung-an* fiction, accounts for why Communist critics have been so hard on the *kung-an*. They have charged that these stories provided the illusion that justice is possible when in fact, feudal relationships made justice impossible. In the minds of these critics, *kung-an* stories were simply another opiate of the masses, satisfying the people's need for justice when none actually existed.[34] The criticism leveled at members of the court which emerges in so many stories are not meant to instigate rebellion against legitimate government but rather serve as outlets for the frustrations of the great mass of people. The *kung-an* provides a picture of justice that

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[34] Idema 157.

emerges through the legal process rather than through the actions of vigilantes, as in the tales of knights-errant (*hsia* 俠).[35] The judge-detective, far from being a vigilante, is the representative of the order and legal authority of the state. The message of the *kung-an* is a positive one, that justice is attainable and will in fact prevail. Wolfgang Bauer has observed:

> The triumph over all other competing ideologies which Confucianism had won in the intellectual field in that period apparently was reflected in the optimistic this-worldly and in a way also unproblematical concept of life and society which implicitly forms the background of the majority of all (not only Chinese) detective stories: i.e. the conviction that the line between good and bad can be drawn clearly and that finally the good on earth will always gain victory over the bad.[36]

Indeed, there is some similarity between *kung-an* fiction and certain religious and

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[35] Thomas B. Stephens emphasizes the disciplinary nature of the Chinese legal system compared to that of the West in his book *Order and Discipline in China: The Shanghai Mixed Court 1911-27* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992). He writes that "the Chinese system is *not* an adjudicative or legal system at all but a disciplinary one, and therefore can only be studied and discussed properly and meaningfully in terms of the theory of disciplinary systems, not in terms of Western jurisprudence" (114). The conflict between the Chinese and the Western views of the law's purpose was highlighted in Shanghai. Differences in legal philosophy were what originally lay behind the foreign powers' demands for extraterritoriality in China. In addition, this incompatibility in legal philosophy was also the cause of the collapse of the Mixed Court of Shanghai. Established in 1864, it was controlled by foreigners after the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1911 and operated until 1927. Located in the International Settlement in Shanghai, this court combined Chinese administrators acting as magistrates and foreign judges who served on the same bench and oversaw cases brought by foreigners against Chinese and cases between Chinese. The Court was an attempt to "weave Western practices and Western principles into the Chinese pattern of dispute resolution and the maintenance of order" (Stephens 114). However, because of the incongruities in legal philosophy that marked Western and Chinese approaches to the law, the attempt was a failure.

[36] Wolfgang Bauer, "The Tradition of the `Criminal Cases of Master Pao' *Pao-kung-an* (*Lung-t'u kung-an*)," *Oriens* 23-24 (1970-1971): 434.

moral tracts.[37] Both are reminders that crime does not pay and that evil will be punished and virtue rewarded. Both provide a code of acceptable behavior and both delineate what conduct violates that code according to the established norms of the day.

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[37] Ma, "Themes" 201.

CHAPTER II

SHERLOCK HOLMES

The seminal figure in the history of Western detective fiction was undoubtedly Sherlock Holmes, the creation of Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). Holmes's popularity propelled detective fiction into a distinctive genre and spawned a whole generation of writers, the most illustrious of which were Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, John Dickson Carr and Josephine Tey.[38] Holmes, however, is certainly the most famous of these fictional detectives, whose reputation is international and whose name is synonymous with the clever sleuth.

The original Sherlock Holmes stories, comprising four novels and fifty-six short stories, are composed of elements of the adventure stories and gothic horror tales that were so popular during the nineteenth century. The detective story, however, differs from the other two genres in that at its core lies a mystery or hidden secret that must be discovered or elucidated. Unlike the *kung-an*, the Western mystery almost always has at its focus the discovery of the identity and motive of the criminal; hence, the appellation "whodunit."[39] The emphasis tends almost invariably to be on the detective's investigation and the solution of the crime. Cawelti offers a synoptic analysis of the Western detective story and, while these elements might not always appear in the order presented nor be clearly demarcated one from the other, they almost inevitably appear in some form.

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[38] John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976) 80.

[39] Cawelti 80-81.

They are:[40]

1. introduction of the detective;
2. crime and clues;
3. investigation of suspects and false solutions;
4. announcement of the solution;
5. explanation of the solution;
6. denouement.

Classical Western detective fiction has in common with *kung-an* stories a basically conservative view of society. In both justice always triumphs and order prevails over chaos. Once the transgressors of legal rules are caught and punished, social order is restored. In both the Western story and the *kung-an* the law and legal arrangements under which the characters live are left unquestioned and uncriticized. Just as the *kung-an* does not question the authority of the emperor or the state, so the Sherlock Holmes stories (and others in the same genre) reflect the ideological superstructure of society, operating within the social and property relationships that prevail. As one commentator has observed: "What is particularly notable about [Western] detective stories . . . is that they only exceptionally raise questions concerning the code; the law itself is accepted as a given."[41] And, he continues:

> Detective stories proper almost always ignore questions about the cause of crime or the legitimacy of the legal procedures such stories represent. In a

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[40] Cawelti 82.

[41] Porter 121.

> detective story, unlike certain early nineteenth-century crime novels, in fact, the law itself is never put on trial.[42]

Despite their similarities, it is important to underscore that the Western detective story and the *kung-an* inhabit different epistemological universes and are governed by disparate ideologies. The world of the *kung-an* is a feudal world, wherein "moral principles such as filial obligation take concrete expression as blood debts; revenge takes precedence over professional process in achieving justice."[43] It is both hierarchical and governed by rules of reciprocity and individual relationship far more than it is governed by abstract laws.[44] Equally important, the ambience of the *kung-an* is one inhabited by demons and supernatural beings whose influence on everyday life is taken for granted. The world of Sherlock Holmes is about as far removed from the supernatural as is possible to conceive.

Holmes's world is a product of nineteenth-century positivism and operates on the assumption that no events are random. All actions have causes and reason provides the tool whereby these causes can be discovered. Every phenomenon can be explained in terms of the natural and there is no recourse to the supernatural. When the supernatural does appear to intrude into the natural world, as in the *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902),

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[42] Porter 122.

[43] Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "Chinese Crime Fiction and Its Formulas at the Turn of the 1980s," *After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society 1978-1981*, ed. Jeffrey C. Kinkley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1985) 95.

[44] See Lien-sheng Yang, "The Concept of `Pao' as a Basis for Social Relations in China," *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) 291-309.

it is only to reveal itself as a product of human design intended to disguise a crime.[45] Roger Caillois notes that "at bottom, the unmasking of a criminal is less important than the reduction of the impossible to the possible, of the inexplicable to the explained, of the supernatural to the natural."[46] Indeed, all of the stories featuring Holmes exude the optimism and faith in reason that governed the Enlightenment.

Sherlock Holmes embodies the figure of the rational man. He is a scientist, cool and calculating. Both he and his readers can attribute his success only to his intellectual abilities and his amazing powers of deduction, never to luck or fate. For Holmes, rational thinking is inevitably the method by which he unravels the confused series of events that is a product either of circumstance or of the culprit's own design to veil his misdeeds. At the conclusion of the story all the seemingly disconnected threads that appear as random elements in the story are tied together into a plausible series of actions. Christopher Clausen has pointed to the crucial role of reason and order in Victorian society, made uncomfortably aware of man's kinship to the apes; evolutionary theory had brought to Victorian consciousness that not only society but civilization itself was a precarious artefact of human development and that it was reason alone that separated man from beast.[47]

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[45] James Kissane and John M. Kissane, "Sherlock Holmes and The Ritual of Reason," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17:4 (March 1963): 353-362.

[46] Roger Caillois, "The Detective Novel as Game," *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, eds. Glenn W. Most and William W. Stowe (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1983) 3.

[47] Christopher Clausen,"Sherlock Holmes, Order, and the Late-Victorian Mind," *Georgia Review* 38.1 (Spring 1984): 116.

Certainly one of the primary reasons for the immense popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories was that it offered a reassuring picture of science at a time when a significant portion of the population felt threatened by the technological changes that were occurring around them.[48] Sherlock Holmes often makes some startling observation for which neither the other characters nor the reader is prepared. But what looks like magic is invariably presented as the product of pure scientific deduction. Once he informs us of the steps by which he arrived at his conclusion, steps that all of us can follow, we become enthralled with the power of science and the ability of deductive reasoning. This process makes less menacing the science over which Holmes has command and allows the reader to feel that he too can, with the requisite knowledge, fully comprehend the world in which he lives. But analysis shows that Holmes's deductive method is often bogus. As Rosemary Jann points out: "Holmes's apparent wizardry rests largely on the fact that Doyle has simply arranged the plots so that the detective either guesses correctly the first time, or easily eliminates alternative hypotheses. The `logical' solution has been created in order to be discovered, the `facts' are allowed to tell only one tale."[49] Similarly, Holmes tells Watson in *The Sign of Four* (1890) that he never guesses. Yet, in deducing that Watson had sent off a telegram that morning, Thomas Sebeok shows that Holmes, contrary to his declaration, had indeed engaged in guesswork:

Holmes can only guess that Watson actually entered the post office, rather

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[48] Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1980) 67.

[49] Rosemary Jann, "Sherlock Holmes Codes the Social Body," *ELH* 57.3 (Fall 1990): 685.

> than having merely walked in front of it. Furthermore, Watson might have entered the post office to meet a friend rather than to conduct some business, and so forth. . . . What make Sherlock Holmes so successful at detection is not that he never guesses but that he guesses so well.[50]

Regardless of whether Holmes's conclusions are the result of good guesses, the effect is to reassure the reader that Holmes's abilities to deduce are within everyone's grasp. Holmes's conclusions are "elementary" because his method is nothing "but systematized common sense." Doyle reinforces this view by having Watson repeatedly admit how "ridiculously simple" Holmes's reasoning is once it is explained.

In addition to rationalism, the other major ideological leitmotif in Western detective fiction is individualism. The stories all assume that the individual is responsible for the crime he perpetrates. Indeed, this view emerges in the term "whodunit" itself.[51] The role of social, economic and historic circumstances that eventuate in the commission of a crime are minimized. Responsibility always lies with individuals, never with society as a whole. As one commentator has concluded: "Arthur Conan Doyle's genius for extrapolating a world of ideal predictability from common behavioral signs brilliantly satisfies this craving in the Sherlock Holmes stories, but at the expense of mystifying the sources of social power."[52]

Unlike the *kung-an* where the criminal is often associated with a certain class, in

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[50] Thomas A. Sebeok and Jean Umiker-Sebeok, "'You Know My Method': A Juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes," *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, eds. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) 21-22.

[51] Jann, *Adventures* 71.

[52] Jann, *Adventures* 70.

the Western whodunit we are always in doubt respecting the criminal's identity and this permits the author to manipulate the reader's expectations and prejudices concerning social classes. The *kung-an* reinforces our views of class behavior while Western detective fiction very often inverts our common expectations respecting the social background of the criminal. It is not uncommon for the twist in the Western detective story to hinge on the ultimate identification of the criminal as belonging to a class we least expect.

Individualist ideology emerges not only in the class identification of the villain but in the character of the Great Detective. Whereas Judge Pao is Solomon, Sherlock Holmes is a direct descendant of Edgar Allan Poe's Auguste Dupin. He is the epitome of the Great Detective. Eschewing Dupin's aristocratic background, Conan Doyle nevertheless retained in Holmes a detached, aristocratic demeanor. Although he has a companion, he is essentially a loner, both in his work and in his private life. It is interesting to observe that neither Sherlock Holmes, Auguste Dupin, Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, Albert Campion nor even Lord Peter Wimsey—for most of his career—are encumbered by spouses. His superior intellect sets him apart from those around him and from the reader, and his idiosyncrasies further separate him from the rest of society.

When one compares the classical Western detective story with the *kung-an,* one is struck by the fact that the detective story almost always confines itself to the discovery of the culprit and the method by which the crime was committed. In this the story's structure very much resembles an intellectual game. This "aestheticizing" of crime, as Foucault would characterize it, reflects a shift in the genre from its earlier moral or religious

treatment to that of a cerebral puzzle. This change certainly goes as far back as Thomas de Quincey's "Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts" which was published in 1827. Cawelti characterizes this transformation in the following way:

> The classic detective story is the fullest embodiment of this attitude because it treats crime as an entertainment, the cycle of crime and punishment becoming an occasion for pleasurable intellectual and emotional stimulation. . . . Though the detective story concerns itself with individual crimes, and its underlying psychological power depends on the manipulation of our feelings of guilt, it is nevertheless quite evident that we are more interested in the form of the crime and the process of its solution than in the sinfulness of the criminal and his punishment.[53]

In keeping with this approach of crime-as-puzzle, the human dimension and tragedy of any death is minimized.[54] Even when the story features a murder that is gruesome in nature, the full import of the death on the people that surround the victim is downplayed. We seldom see the victim mourned nor are we treated to the personal complexities that arise as a consequence of his death since such details would draw our attention away from the detective's investigatory process. This is particularly true in the Sherlock Holmes stories. More often than not, the reason why Holmes agrees to take on a case is because he finds its circumstances intriguing, and not because he is moved by the human dimension of the tragedy. Indeed, an especially challenging case is in some ways no more than a real-life substitute for the cocaine to which he is addicted as a method for keeping his mind alert and finely tuned in the intervals between one intellectual challenge and another.

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[53] Cawelti 54-55.

[54] Cawelti 81.

The classic Western detective story depends for its effectiveness on two apparently contradictory factors. First, the crime must leave in its wake a number of tangible clues that make it absolutely clear that some agency is responsible for it. Second, the crime must appear to be insoluble.[55] Thus, the reader must be made to feel that he, along with the detective, has a fair chance of solving the puzzle and in matching wits with the story's detective hero. Inasmuch as the reader believes himself to possess knowledge about the case equal to that of the detective's, it is all the more amazing and extraordinary that it is only the detective's perspicacity that can solve the crime.

Once the crime is solved, the classic Western detective story concludes. In this respect it differs markedly from the *kung-an* in that the story contains no depiction of the legal process by which the criminal is tried, sentenced and punished. Jeffrey Kinkley put the difference between the two genres in this way:

> The archetypal plot in the classical Western whodunit is inquiry into a mystery. Chinese stories present rather a quest for justice. Their concern is as much with commission of the crime in the beginning and restitution or retribution at the end, as with the middle process of detection which is all that matters in the West. Chinese stories must end only after the criminal has confessed; better still, he ought to have been punished, and the honest man he cuckolded happily remarried.[56]

In the Western detective story the reader can only trust that, in the end, justice will be done and that birth and high rank will not immunize one to the operations of the law. When in "The Red-headed League" the aristocratic John Clay, whom we are informed is a member of the higher aristocracy, haughtily proclaims his blue blood, we might

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[55] Cawelti 84-85.

[56] Kinkley, "Chinese Crime Fiction" 94.

momentarily fear that his social position will serve to exempt him from the rigors of the law. But we are quickly reassured when the apprehending policeman replies sarcastically, unimpressed by his rank.

Clay's inevitable punishment is partly a function of the fact that the punishment to be visited on him for his crimes is not for purposes of vengeance, but rather, in order to protect society or to reform the criminal. Justice in the *kung-an*, on the other hand, rests on the notion of vengeance. Since Judge Pao is an official of the state his function is to maintain the status quo with the greatest moral rigor. Sherlock Holmes, on the other hand, is a private citizen. Although he sometimes aids the police, he is neither a government official nor does he possess governmental powers, as does Judge Pao. Holmes is called in to aid the police but is very often viewed as a competitor of the police and is only grudgingly tolerated by them. The police invariably fail in the Sherlock Holmes stories. They view Holmes as a competitor and an intruder into their business. Holmes for his part views them with contempt. Only in instances where the crime appears insoluble to the authorities is Holmes consulted. And he alone is called upon to undertake the investigation of certain offenses, those requiring the highest levels of discretion.

In fact, Sherlock Holmes occasionally serves a higher form of justice than that provided by the written law of the nation. In several cases Holmes believes that justice is best served by letting the culprit go free. For example, in the "The Blue Carbuncle" he allows the butler responsible for the theft, after concluding that he would commit no more crimes, to go unpunished on the grounds that prison would indelibly corrupt his character. Holmes observes of this act and of his relation to the police:

> I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies. . . . I suppose that I am commuting a felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul. This fellow will not go wrong again. He is too terribly frightened. Send him to gaol now and you make him a gaol-bird for life.[57]

A sociological examination of the role that the classic Western detective story and particularly the Sherlock Holmes stories plays in late-Victorian and Edwardian life reveals that this genre acts to support the whole array of middle-class values as normal and natural. Jann has concluded that Doyle used nineteenth century typologies to lend scientific support to the social order with which he identified and "to focus on instabilities in the classification of class and gender" that betray his ideological values.[58] It is middle-class values that are regarded as natural and all other values are classified in terms of their deviations from what is male, British, and bourgeois.[59]

With the increasing wealth of the middle class, law and order became an increasing priority in late-Victorian England. In explicating the relation between bourgeois values and detective fiction, Michel Foucault has concluded that

> once capitalism had physically entrusted wealth, in the form of raw material and means of production, to popular hands, it became absolutely essential to protect this wealth. Because industrial society requires that wealth be directly in the hands, not of its owners, but of those whose labour, by putting that wealth to work, enables a profit to be made from it. How was this wealth to be protected? By a rigorous morality, of course: hence the formidable layer of moralisation deposited on the nineteenth-century population. Look at the immense campaigns to christianise the workers during this period. It was absolutely necessary to constitute the populace

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[57] Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, ed. William S. Baring-Gould, vol. 1, 466-467.

[58] Jann, "Sherlock Holmes" 687.

[59] Jann, "Sherlock Holmes" 692.

> as a moral subject and to break its commerce with criminality, and hence to segregate the delinquents and to show them to be dangerous not only for the rich but for the poor as well, vice-ridden instigators of the gravest social perils. Hence also the birth of detective literature and the importance of the *fait divers*, the horrific newspaper crime stories.[60]

No character better represents the solid moral virtues and prejudices of the middle class than does the figure of Dr. Watson, Holmes's loyal and able sidekick. Watson is decent, honest, fair, and brave. Above all he can be relied on to reflect the whole range of late-Victorian values. While without the mental brilliance of Sherlock Holmes, Watson, even more than Holmes, acts as a paragon of the British gentleman, upright and professional at all times and is genuinely outraged at the deviant behavior of the criminals that Holmes confronts.[61] It is within this bourgeois setting that crime represents such a dramatic point of departure. As Cawelti notes, "the crime symbolizes not only an infraction of the law but a disruption of the normal order of society."[62] This "normal order"is epitomized by the comfortable surroundings of 221B Baker Street where most of the stories begin and end.

Inasmuch as the Holmes stories project the ideologies of demythologization through rationalism and individualism, they represent the values of modernity. While these particular aspects of the modern detective story do not all appear in their Chinese

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[60] Michel Foucault, "Prison Talk," *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 41.

[61] Knight 84.

[62] Cawelti 83.

counterpart, the Huo Sang story, there are certain elements of modernity that do surface and it is to them that we now turn.

CHAPTER III

HUO SANG, THE CHINESE SHERLOCK HOLMES

Western detective fiction achieved an enormous popularity in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, which is attested to by the many translations of Western stories that appeared in China's major cities. One scholar has estimated that more than a thousand titles were translated in the late Ch'ing period, of which about five hundred were detective stories.[63] And a magazine publisher in 1908 observed that of the various fictional categories, detective stories sold best, followed by love stories, works on social mores, military affairs, adventure, science and personal improvement.[64]

Among the heroes of these translated detective stories was Edgar Allan Poe's Auguste Dupin and, of course, Sherlock Holmes, who was by far the most popular. So popular was Holmes that Jeffrey Kinkley has determined that during the first half of the twentieth century, due to the numerous translations and imitations of his works, he became "a genuine *Chinese* literary hero."[65] Holmes's transliterated name, (*Fu-erh-mo-ssu* 福尔摩斯), was derived from the Fu-chien dialect which pronounces the "h" as an "f."

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[63] A Ying, *Wan Ch'ing hsiao-shuo shih* [A history of late Ch'ing fiction] (1955; Pei-ching: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u pan she, 1991) 186.

[64] Chueh Wo, editor of the magazine *Hsiao-shuo lin* 小說林 [Forest of Fiction] 1907-1908. See Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in Late Ch'ing and Beyond," *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 381.

[65] Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "The Politics of Detective Fiction in Post-Mao China: Rebirth or Reextinction?" *Armchair Detective: A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Appreciation of Mystery, Detective, and Suspense Fiction* 18.4 (Fall 1985): 373.

One of the most popular translators of the period and the man responsible for translating the Holmes stories was Lin Shu, who wrote in classical Chinese (*wen-yen* 文言), but he was soon followed by a host of Chinese imitators. It was largely due to Lin Shu's translations of Arthur Conan Doyle at the turn of the century that the Western detective story in China became synonymous with Sherlock Holmes. As early as the second decade of the century native Chinese versions of the Western detective story were being produced in huge numbers for the mass urban market. One of the most popular of these new Chinese detectives, modeled on Holmes was Huo Sang, referred to by his creator as the "Chinese Sherlock Holmes."[66]

Huo Sang's creator was Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing 程小青 whose original name was Ch'eng Ch'ing-hsin 青心. He was also known as Ch'eng Chien-lu 瞰廬. Born in Shanghai in 1893 of a family originally from the province of Anwei, Ch'eng's childhood was marked by poverty. At age sixteen he discontinued his studies in order to be a watchmaker's apprentice. Ch'eng's knowledge of English and his literary accomplishments was solely the result of self-study. At the age of twenty-three his family moved to Su-chou because of financial difficulties. He later taught at the middle school attached to Tong-wu University and at the Ching-hai Girls Normal School. Following the Communist revolution of 1949 he became a Party committee member and joined the Chinese Writers Association. He was later persecuted by the Party, apparently because of

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[66] There have been two recent editions of Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing's Huo Sang stories. One is from Taiwan: *Chen-t'an t'ai-tou, Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing*, ed. Fan Po-ch'ün (T'ai-pei: Yeh ch'iang ch'u pan she, 1993); while the other is from mainland China, *Huo Sang t'an an chi*, 13 vols. (Pei-Ching: Ch'ün chung ch'u pan she, 1986-1988).

a dearth of ideological zeal, although firm evidence on this matter is lacking. He died in 1976.[67]

Ch'eng is generally considered one of the best and most popular Chinese writers of detective stories of the 1920s and 30s. Fan Po-ch'ün refers to him as "master of sincized detective fiction" ("*chen-t'an hsiao-shuo chung-kuo hua chih tsung-chiang*" 偵探小說中國化之宗匠). And Liu Ts'un-yan writes of him:

> Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing . . . [was one of] the two best writers of stories of detection at the time. Besides his many translations from Conan Doyle, Maurice Leblanc, Earl Derr Biggers, Leslie Charteris and S.S. van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright), Ch'eng's creation in Chinese of a hundred-odd cases involving the great detective Huo Sang (probably derived from Hawthorne in transliteration), and his exploits in Shanghai, earned him tremendous fame.[68]

What is immediately noticeable about the Huo Sang narratives is the extent to which they incorporate the conventions found in the Sherlock Holmes stories. One of the more interesting of the Huo Sang stories is the novella *The Waves of the Woeful Sea* (*Yüan-hai po* 怨海波)[69] which was published in serial form in the magazine *Chen-t'an shih-chieh* 偵探世界 [World of Detection] and appeared in twelve episodes over six

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[67] P'ei Hsiao-wei, "Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing," *Chung-kuo wen hsüeh ta tz'u-tien* [Dictionary of Chinese Literature], eds. Ma Liang-ch'un and Li Fu-tien, vol. 8 (T'ien-chin shih: T'ien-chin jen min ch'u pan she, 1991): 5739-5740.

[68] Liu Ts'un-yan, "Introduction: `Middlebrow' in Perspective," *Chinese Middlebrow Fiction: From the Ch'ing and Early Republican Eras*, ed. Liu Ts'un-yan, with the assistance of John Minford (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984) 32. The second writer to which Liu refers is Lu Tan-an 陸澹盦 (Yen-wen 衍文).

[69] See appendix A.

issues, from May 1 (the inaugural issue of the magazine) to July 15, 1923.[70] The Huo Sang story follows the classic pattern of a whodunit. Suspicion falls on virtually every character in turn until it is revealed that the culprit is one of the characters one least suspects. The story is replete with red herrings and the reader is given ample examples of Huo Sang's extraordinary perceptiveness and deductive ability throughout. We are introduced to Huo's amazing deductive mind in the very preamble to the story where he deduces from his upstairs bedroom that the visitor who just entered his house is a young woman who has not slept all night and who has come to report a violent crime. He later tells his friend Pao Lang 包朗 that he had based his conclusion solely on the sound made by the woman's high heels and the reply of the housekeeper to the woman's query. It is not his deductive brilliance alone, however, that makes him similar to Sherlock Holmes. Huo carries a magnifying glass and plays the violin; and, like Holmes, he is also a heavy smoker but cigarettes have replaced Holmes's omnipresent pipe.

Huo's manner, like that of Holmes, is aloof and arrogant. He is independent of mind and always makes clear to the client that, should he take on the case, he will not act as the client's advocate but will seek the truth regardless of where it leads. Huo is also fortunate in having as his constant companion and friend, a Watson-like character named Pao Lang. Pao is often a more active participant in Huo's investigations than is Watson,

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[70] This twice-monthly magazine was devoted to detective fiction and lasted only one year (twenty-four issues), beginning in June 1923. Its demise was not so much the result of lack of readership as to difficulties in producing enough stories to fill each issue. See E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 260; and also *Yuan-yang hu-tieh p'ai yen-chiu tzu-liao* [Research Materials on the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School], ed. Wei Shao-ch'ang (Shanghai: Wen-I ch'u-pan she, 1962) 347-349.

but, unlike Watson, he does not reduce the detective's cases to stories for publication in one of the city's fashionable magazines; however, Pao does act as the story's narrator and Huo's cases are seen through his eyes. Since the text of each story follows Pao's train of thought, Pao serves the useful narrative function of regularly misdirecting the reader and thereby preventing him from prematurely solving the mystery. Indeed, Pao's character is used as a device to reflect the relative confusion of the reader in the face of the mystery with which he is presented, especially when this is compared to Huo's perceptive abilities. Pao thus acts as an effective foil to Huo's brilliance.

Another significant feature which the Huo Sang stories have in common with the Holmes stories is that both tend to situate their crimes within domestic settings. The family plays a particularly important role within the plot structure of both narratives. And much of the action tends to be located in middle-class households, very often the household of Holmes's client.

In comparing the Huo Sang stories with the *kung-an*, it is particularly significant that the emphasis shifts from either the commission of the crime itself or the apprehension and punishment of the criminal to the identification of the culprit. The more modern story does not concern itself with the machinery of the law. Punishment of the criminal is never depicted and rarely mentioned. Thus, in *The Waves of the Woeful Sea* the murderer takes poison immediately before confessing. However, she is rushed to the hospital before expiring and the reader is not informed whether she later dies, thus opening up the possibility that she may survive. Had she survived, she would certainly have been tried, convicted and punished. The readers of Western detective stories of this period are

assured that murderers are almost inevitably executed. However Chinese law during the 1920s and 30s is recounted as being more flexible with regard to premeditated murder. "'Punishment for murder is generally death," William Hung has observed, "but it may be decreased to a sentence of life imprisonment or imprisonment for ten years or more according to the nature and circumstances of the case."[71] A sentence lighter than death, therefore, might well have been the outcome given the fact that in *The Waves of the Woeful Sea* the victim is thoroughly contemptible, while the motives of the murderer appear admirable. Such a twist would simply not have been possible in the *kung-an.*

One commentator maintains that the popularity of Western whodunits and their Chinese imitations, such as *The Waves of the Woeful Sea*, is due to the near total absence of this kind of fiction in Chinese literature. "Even those Chinese critics that at that time valued traditional Chinese fiction above the translated works readily admitted that the detective novel was new to China and were enthusiastic about it."[72] Yet such a simple analysis ignores other factors which help to explain the success of this new literary formula in China. As Porter points out, the form of the whodunit is easily transported into different cultures:

> Once the principle of heroic male action against an enemy is conceded, such identifications occur at the level of surface ideological variables. At that level, therefore, the genre is ideologically reversible, as the quasi-universality of its appeal suggests. The fixity of the investigative action that is the generic *sine qua non* gives rise to a limited number of roles which may be distributed among characters most of whose attributes are no

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[71] William Hung, *Outlines of Modern Chinese Law* ([Shanghai]: n.p., [1934]; Arlington, Virginia: University Publications of America, 1976), 261.

[72] Idema 158.

> more inherent in those roles than are the red and white uniforms. . . . Consequently, a hero may be male or female, young or old, lean and tough or corpulent and benevolent, European or Asian, liberal or communist. Heroism, it seems, may take the most unlikely of forms while remaining true to its essence. Moreover, the same is true of villainy.[73]

The universality of this genre is attested to by the fact that Ronald Burt de Waal's bibliographies of Sherlock Holmes list translations, parodies and imitations in no less than fifty-four languages.[74] In contrast, the *kung-an* is much more culturally specific because it is intimately tied to the Chinese legal system. There is currently a Taiwan-produced television show that features Judge Pao and is apparently immensely popular throughout the Chinese communities in Asia. But its popularity is as yet still limited to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, and to countries with sizeable Chinese populations such as Thailand and Indonesia, which points to its sectarian appeal.[75]

Another reason for the popularity of the Western whodunit is the similarity between certain aspects of social life in late-Victorian England and late-Ch'ing and early Republican China. Both were basically conservative societies and just as Dr. Watson is the voice of respectable middle-class England, so Pao Lang, as the narrator of the Huo Sang stories, represents the views and values of the Chinese middle class during the period. The emphasis on hard work, family obligations, the importance of social

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[73] Porter 127.

[74] Ronald Burt de Waal, *The International Sherlock Holmes: A Companion Volume to The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1980) 36-51; and *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: A Classified and Annotated List of Material Relating to Their Lives and Adventures* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1974) 47-97.

[75] "Chinese Judge, Malaysian Judgment," *The Economist* 21 Oct. 1995: 40.

conventions and proper behavior, all play crucial roles in both types of stories. Indeed, Pao Lang's attitudes are in many ways identical to those of Dr. Watson. For example, Pao immediately becomes suspicious of a character in one of the stories upon learning that he is unemployed and has not gotten up from bed until four o'clock in the afternoon.[76] Despite the fact that Huo Sang realizes that he is almost certainly innocent, the detective treats the young man to a sermon on the necessity of changing his lifestyle.

Both late-Victorian and early Republican Chinese societies share a similar attitude toward the relations between the sexes. The many scenes of seductions and rapes that are so popular in the *kung-an* are noticeably absent in both the Sherlock Holmes and the Huo Sang stories. For example, in the story, "Eighty-four" (*Pa-shih-ssu* 八十四),[77] Pao Lang finds himself in an awkward situation when a young woman in distress enters his home. When she requests that he turn off all the lights, Pao immediately becomes uncomfortable. While both are in his darkened study Pao realizes that "no more than one foot separates them in the dark!"[78] His fear of this scene being misinterpreted by his housekeeper is surely similar to how Dr. Watson would react under such circumstances.

Yet an additional factor that may account for the popularity of the new-style detective fiction in China is its urban setting. Most stories were situated in Shanghai which best reflected the new urbanization and the growing Chinese middle class. China's

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[76] *Waves*, issue 5, ch.2, p. 2.

[77] Ch'eng, Hsiao-ch'ing, "Eighty-four" (Pa-shih-ssu), *Huo Sang t'an an chi*, vol. 1 (Pei-ching: Ch'ün chung ch'u pan she, 1986) 83-124. The story is summarized in appendix B.

[78] "Eighty-four" 91.

political, economic, and social landscape had changed drastically from the heyday of the *kung-an* story in the seventeenth century. In 1911 the Manchu rulers had been overthrown and China became a republic. Between that time and the date of these stories China was undergoing the painful process of modernization and nowhere was this process more advanced than in Shanghai.

Unlike other Chinese cities, Shanghai was unique in being relatively new; its creation dated back only to the nineteenth century. It was a city composed mainly of immigrants and also served as the nation's premier treaty port. As a consequence, it was the center of commerce and merchant activities and was the most cosmopolitan city in the country. People from all parts of the world flocked to it seeking to make their fortunes, including large numbers of Europeans and Americans.

A hub of trade and industry, Shanghai saw the burgeoning of a significant middle class. Its foreign concessions were access points for Western ideas and literature, and books and magazines from all over the world were readily available. In addition, the areas under foreign control were able to offer protection to Chinese writers from legal persecution by the Chinese government. Largely as a result of serving as a home to Chinese writers and a large middle class population, Shanghai became the center of the Chinese publishing world.

Much of the large body of Chinese popular literature that thrived in the city in this period has been termed the literature of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School (*Yuan-yang hu-tieh p'ai*) 鴛鴦蝴蝶派. Originating in the second decade of the twentieth century, it reached its height in the 1920s and 30s and ended with the onset of the

Japanese invasion. The term "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School" is a pejorative one, coined by critics of this kind of literature because of the name given the traditional style that dominated sentimental novels. This label refers to the traditional symbols associated with love and fidelity and was used by critics to attack all types of traditional popular fiction. While the term was used to refer to literature that had its roots in the traditional Chinese style, the Huo Sang stories were also included, despite their being derived from Western sources. The appellation was quickly accepted by those identified with this style of writing and to this day the term is employed in mainland China to refer to all forms of popular literature, including "detective" novels, "knight-errant" novels, "scandal" novels, "ideal" or "fantasy" novels, "comic" novels and "legendary" novels. Outside of mainland China, however, the term today refers exclusively to traditional love stories.[79]

No statistics regarding the readership of Butterfly fiction are available. However, through interviews with authors, publishers and readers, E. Perry Link has concluded that the audience for this kind of writing came primarily from the lower middle class (*hsiao shih min* 小市民).[80] These readers included clerks, high school students, small merchants, housewives and other moderately educated city dwellers. While the petty bourgeoisie comprised the major audience for these stories, members of the upper class, including wealthy bankers and industrialists, were among these stories' fans, as were members of the intelligentsia. The various genres that comprise Butterfly fiction are so closely identified with each other among Chinese readers that it is not unreasonable to

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[79] Link 7-8.

[80] Link 189-190.

assume that the readership for the Huo Sang stories reflects the audience for Butterfly fiction in general.

Most of the critics of Butterfly fiction were writers and intellectuals associated with the May Fourth Movement, who regarded this type of fiction as competing with their own publications. Also based in Shanghai, the May Fourth Movement took its name from the date on which students in Pei-Ching demonstrated against the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (May 4, 1919). Despite the fact that China supported the Allied powers during the First World War, the Versailles signatories transferred to Japan the concessions that Germany had earlier wrested from China. This event gave rise to protests throughout the country and was the culmination of a century-long decline in China's territorial integrity. The May Fourth Movement was highly nationalistic and its supporters despaired of China's weakness and backwardness. They diagnosed the nation's sad political condition as a symptom of a deeper cultural malaise. China's problems, they felt, were rooted in its ancient Confucian traditions and customs, which they regarded as the source of superstition and corruption. As a consequence, the leaders of the May Fourth Movement called for the eradication of the values associated with Confucian China.

The remedy, they thought, was a modernized China which they equated with a Westernized China. The slogan adopted by this loosely-formed movement was "science and democracy." The writers associated with this iconoclastic movement sought to create a new nation based on Western ideals of equality and progress. They advocated the formation of a New Literature, one that employed the vernacular (*pai-hua* 白話). They also experimented with Western literary forms. This break with China's intellectual past is

seen even in the frequent use of the word "new": "new youth," "new literature," "new times," "new China," and so on. Unsurprisingly, these critics dismissed Butterfly fiction as escapist and lacking in seriousness, and viewed it as furthering the values of the old order and ideology.

However, the view that Butterfly fiction, whose primary aim was to entertain, unconditionally upheld Confucian ideology is questionable. Rey Chow has demonstrated that the moral lessons the stories often recounted were incompatible with the narratives. This dichotomy between lurid detail, on the one hand, and the many object lessons placed in the mouths of the stories' characters undermined Confucian ideology and displayed a "subversiveness which is peculiar to Butterfly literature."[81] These stories "invite disbelief by inflating to fantastical proportions the Confucian society's addictive ideologies and are therefore `dangerous' for that society, which relies on its members' *serious* involvement with what they read, learn, and study."[82]

The Huo Sang stories, too, brought into question the traditional social institutions of Confucian China. Thus, in *The Waves of the Woeful Sea*, concubinage, which had for centuries been an accepted part of Chinese social life, is disapproved of. The victim of the story had earlier wished to acquire a concubine (an institution which was not outlawed until 1950) because his wife did not bear him a child. It is clear that the writer regards this proposal as morally suspect, especially since it issues from a thoroughly disreputable

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[81] Rey Chow, "Rereading Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: A Response to the `Postmodern' Condition," *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Thomas Docherty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 477.

[82] Chow, "Reading" 477-478.

character. It was common in this type of fiction that villains were depicted as all-bad, and Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing, the author of the story, continues this tradition in characterizing the murdered man. The character's negative traits are extensive: he leads a dissolute life, drinking and gambling; he beats his wife and his sister; he lures his wife to gambling dens and encourages her to run up gambling debts; he takes advantage of family connections to gain preferential treatment at work; and he tries to implicate a friend in a crime of which the friend is innocent. On the other hand, those who oppose concubinage are his wife and the prospective concubine's elder brother; both are characters above reproach. The brother especially, who is educated and a schoolteacher like the author, despite his family's poverty, adamantly refuses to allow his sister to cohabit with this dishonorable and shameless man.

The writers associated with the May Fourth Movement were certainly not the only intellectuals concerned with the situation in China, as shown by the example of the author of the Huo Sang stories. For example, at the beginning of "Eighty-four," the reader is informed that Pao Lang is in the process of writing a patriotic work urging a reawakening of China's national spirit.[83] Awareness of China's weakness was particularly acute in treaty ports like Shanghai since this city was the meeting point of Eastern and Western cultures and served as a symbol of the interaction between China and the West. The extraterritorial rights that the foreign powers possessed in China were constant reminders of the nation's inferior status and led to a genuine fear among many Chinese that the country would be partitioned. A further source of shame to the Chinese was the fact that

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[83] "Eighty-four" 83.

foreign-controlled sections of Shanghai were cleaner, better maintained, and more orderly than were the Chinese portions. Thomas Stephens observes that "the treaty ports, with their innovations and new ways of life, were resented and rejected by the majority of Chinese as alien and threatening." Shanghai did not so much reflect a merging of East and West as a sharpening of the differences.[84]

As a consequence of China's inferior position, modernity, which was associated with the West, was also closely tied to imperialism. Leo Ou-fan Lee discusses the ambivalent attitude of many of the writers of the May Fourth Movement regarding modernity as a historical reality manifested in Shanghai. They marveled at the technology and the conveniences of the West, but at the same time saw foreign imperialism lurking in the shadows.[85]

This attitude of distrust toward the West is evident in the Huo Sang stories. On the one hand, new Western technology like telephones, cars, and trains are shown to be a normal feature of modern urban life. Many of the characters wear Western clothing. However, those who have taken on too many characteristics of the West are depicted in a negative light. In "Eighty-four," for example, the murder victim is a comprador, a character whom we immediately suspect as being unsavory, especially when we learn that he lives in a large Western-style house. Just as with the Buddhist monks in the *kung-an*

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[84] Stephens 115.

[85] Leo Ou-fan Lee, "In Search of Modernity: Some Reflections on a New Mode of Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Chinese History and Literature," *Ideas Across Cultures: Essays on Chinese Thought in Honor of Benjamin I. Schwartz*, eds. Paul A. Cohen and Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990) 127, 133.

stories, the comprador's profession predetermines him to be villainous. At the end of the story we learn that he patronized prostitutes and profited from a natural disaster that had caused great suffering.

There is every reason to believe that the anti-Western elements in the Huo Sang stories contributed to their popularity. In contrast, the writings of the May Fourth Movement never achieved the same degree of general acceptance because of their pro-Western attitude. The writers associated with this group had adopted a style of Chinese writing that reflected a Western syntax that most Chinese found uncomfortably foreign. In advocating a national literature, the members of this movement had alienated themselves from the great mass of the Chinese literate public and their audiences tended to be concentrated in the great cities of the Chinese coast, particularly Shanghai. It is ironic that a national literature that would be embraced by most Chinese proved to be, not the products of the May Fourth Movement, but rather the very Butterfly literature that they so strongly condemned.

The ideology of the May Fourth Movement simply proved far too radical for most Chinese, whose social outlook was traditionally conservative and who consequently feared the collapse of Confucian standards. The Huo Sang stories, while they embraced much of the new technology of the West, did not threaten these basic values. Indeed, Huo Sang himself often defends traditional morality. Thus in one story, when early in the morning a man answers the doorbell at the home of an unmarried female character, Huo Sang

expresses shock and outrage at the implied sexual intimacy that might have taken place.[86] And, on another occasion, a character is moved to launch into an attack on modern egalitarianism (*p'ing-teng chu-yi* 平等主義).[87] These examples clearly demonstrate the stories' defense of traditional morality and social values, which the author must have regarded as under threat from the process of Westernization that China was then undergoing. The purpose of these stories, as E. Perry Link notes, was to keep the values of the West at arm's length, hence his description of them as "fiction of comfort."[88]

The Huo Sang stories, while formally Western, were in ideology for the most part traditional. In analyzing the relationship between the police and Huo Sang, for example, it is clear that unlike Sherlock Holmes's dealings with Scotland Yard, who often regarded him as a rival, Huo Sang invariably takes charge of any investigation with the tacit permission of the local Shanghai police. Thus, in *The Waves of the Woeful Sea*, both the police and the coroner report to Huo. Indeed, Huo directs the entire investigation of the crime, to the point where even the chief of detectives follows his orders. The hierarchical relationship here could well reflect the influence of the earlier *kung-an* story, where the judge-detective is officially in charge by virtue of his rank.

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[86] Ch'eng, Hsiao-ch'ing, "Wu hou de kui su" 舞後的歸宿 , *Hou Sang t'an an chi*, vol. 3 (Pei-Ching: Ch'ün chung ch'u pan she, 1986) 67.

[87] Ch'eng, Hsiao-ch'ing, "Lun hsia hsueh" 輪下血 , *Hou Sang t'an an chi*, vol. 1 (Pei-Ching: Ch'ün chung ch'u pan she, 1986) 125.

[88] See Link 196-235.

CONCLUSION

Simon Leys (Pierre Ryckmans) states that one of the reasons the study of China is so interesting for Western scholars is its stark difference from Western attitudes and values.[89] China had for countless centuries considered its culture as a world unto itself. Its confidence in its own past and achievements was unchallenged. However, with the arrival of the Western powers in the nineteenth century, China's psychological isolation was broken. Western civilization "undermined the stability and coherence of traditional culture and generally influenced the direction of intellectual and cultural change."[90] The nation's history in the twentieth century was characterized by China's need to reorient itself and its place in the world from one in which she stood at the center, with secondary tributaries around her, to one in which she was but one of many nations.[91] The surge of nationalist feeling that swept China at the beginning of the twentieth century was one response to her predicament. But this sense of nationalism itself is evidence of the recognition of China's new position as a nation and not as the totality of all culture. There was wide agreement among the country's intellectuals that change was needed but what form this change would take and to what degree was uncertain. It varied from simple

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[89] He writes: "The unique fascination that China exerts upon all those who come into contact with her can in a way be compared to the attraction between the opposite sexes." "Madness of the Wise: Ricci in China," *The Burning Forest: Essays on Chinese Culture and Politics* (New York: Henry Holt, 1983) 35-36.

[90] LinYü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979) 10.

[91] Joseph R. Levenson, *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

reform to radical revolution.

Conventional scholarship has focused on the young students and writers associated with the May Fourth Movement, who believed that the solution lay in a radical break with the past. For these writers, the model was the West and the goal, modernization. However, despite the radicalism of the May Fourth Movement its adherents resembled traditional Chinese intellectuals in that they saw themselves as definers of culture. Despite their expressed aim of creating a new national popular literature, their outlook toward culture remained elitist. However, at roughly the same time, from 1910 to 1930, a new mass literature was in fact born which was quite distinct from the May Fourth Movement. It too was centered in Shanghai and came to be labeled Mandarin Duck and Butterfly fiction. Unlike the Westernized prose of the writers associated with the May Fourth Movement, this new literature was derived primarily from the traditional forms of Chinese writing. The Huo Sang stories were part of this popular literature which catered to the tastes of a primarily urban, lower middle-class audience.

Living in the most Westernized city in China, the audience that so enthusiastically embraced Butterfly fiction was keenly aware of the values associated with modernity and the West. They marveled at and used the technology the West had brought them, but strongly wished to retain traditional Chinese values while doing so. A comparison of the traditional *kung-an* stories and the Huo Sang stories illustrates this change.

In Confucian China, social order, morality and the state were closely tied. The *kung-an* demonstrated the crucial role of the state in redressing wrongs and in restoring order and harmony to society. The great attraction of the *kung-an* to its audience was just

this: that it embodied the traditional view of social order and showed it in operation. In contrast, the Huo Sang story, with its origins in Western detective fiction, separated the detective from official state power, although traces of it still linger in the relationship of the detective to the police. This change entailed depriving the Huo Sang stories of the moral force that earlier characterized the *kung-an*. In fact, part of the moral strength of the *kung-an* was the fact that the punishment of the culprit was an integral part of the story, an aspect absent from more modern detective fiction.

The *kung-an* story could only have been written and read within the context of traditional Chinese values. The Huo Sang story, on the other hand, having adopted so many features of the Western detective story, became one national exemplar of international urban pulp fiction. Perhaps there is no better example of this than in one of the Huo Sang stories, "In the Huang-p'u River," where the detective is called upon to rescue a wealthy man's son from kidnappers.[92] While the story is in fact set in Shanghai, it could just as easily have occurred in Chicago or Liverpool. In this regard, escapist detective fiction was to lose its national distinctiveness and merge into a world literature that happened to be written in Chinese and thus joined the movement towards modernity where national differences fade and universal notions prevail.

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[92] Ch'eng Hsiao-ch'ing, "Huang-p'u chiang chung" 黃浦江中, *Huo Sang t'an an chi*, vol. 1 (Pei-Ching: Ch'ün chung ch'u pan she, 1986) 38-82.

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Appendix A

PLOT SUMMARY OF *THE WAVES OF THE WOEFUL SEA*

Late one night, while Huo Sang and his friend Pao Lang are in bed, a woman arrives and informs them that her husband had been murdered that night. She explains that she had gone to her mother's house earlier that day, and that around midnight the gatekeeper of her husband's home, Chin Shou, tracked her down to report that her husband had fallen unconscious. She then quickly returned home only to find that he was already dead. She had searched out Huo Sang because she feared the police would not carry out a proper investigation and that certain people, in particular her mother-in-law, would suspect her of murdering her husband. While reporting this she freely admits to Huo Sang and Pao Lang that she and her husband often quarreled and that her marriage was not one of love but by arrangement. In fact, she adds, she had left her own home for her mother's earlier that day after they had again quarreled. Hearing this, Huo tells the woman to return home and informs her that they will follow shortly.

When Huo Sang and Pao Lang arrive at the house of the murdered man, the gatekeeper informs them that his mistress had that very moment again gone out after having words with her mother-in-law. Huo and Pao then overhear the police questioning the dead man's family. The victim's younger sister, Chang Hsiao-ch'in, reports that she was upstairs in her bedroom and that she had heard noises that sounded like two people fighting. When she went downstairs to investigate, she found her brother lying dead on the floor of his study. At that point she screamed and fainted.

The mother of the deceased, the elder Mrs. Chang, relates how Yu-kang, the murdered man, had returned home about ten o'clock that evening and was discovered by Hsiao-ch'in approximately an hour later. She further reported that her son had hit his wife on a number of occasions in the past. In addition, he had also hit his sister recently.

At this point Huo and Pao enter the room and are met by the chief of detectives, Yao Kuo-ying. Yao introduces the new arrivals to the assembled group and Huo at this point informs the elder Mrs. Chang that although he was asked to investigate the death of her son by her daughter-in-law, he regarded it as his first duty to redress the wrong done the victim and to see that justice was done. He did not regard it as part of his function to defend his client. The elder Mrs. Chang then tells Huo that the death of his son is doubly tragic since it would mean that the Chang line of descent would end.

Huo, Pao and Yao then examine the body. Huo immediately casts doubt on the fact that knife wounds apparent on the corpse were responsible for Chang's death. He discovers that the deceased exhibited signs of having been poisoned. Huo concludes that the case is extremely unusual and shows that the victim, after having been stabbed, was thoroughly searched. In going through the victim's pockets, Yao discovers a key which is found to unlock an iron chest located in the study where the man was killed. When the chest is unlocked and found to be empty, Huo deduces that it had earlier contained a sum of money. Yao uncovers a pair of scissors in the dead man's desk and then notices that a corner section of the curtains in the room had been cut away.

Chang Yu-kang was apparently rich, a high-ranking employee in a wheat flour company located in the English Concession. In searching Chang's study, Huo finds an

invitation to a wedding banquet to have been held earlier that evening and discovers that either the victim (or possibly the murderer) had vomited into a spittoon next to the desk.

The coroner arrives and, among things, carries away the spittoon for analysis and, at the same time, takes a sample of the contents of a teapot that had been standing near the victim in order to test for poison. Huo then assigns Yao, Pao, and the patrolman who had been accompanying Yao, to a variety of different duties. Pao searches the study and determines that no one could have entered or left by the windows. In the study he finds a bankbook which shows a recent withdrawal in the amount of 50,000 yuan (assumed to have been placed in the chest) and a number of romances. Between the pages of one of these books, Pao discovers a photograph of a young girl and also finds an anonymous letter reporting that Chang's wife had been seen in the company of another man. At this point the patrolman calls Pao outside to look at a footprint from which Pao is able to ascertain that someone had been spying on Chang.

Meanwhile, Huo questions the gatekeeper. He learns that Chang had grown fearful three or four days earlier. During the previous evening Chang had walked straight to his study upon his return home. The gatekeeper remembers that several days before, an unknown man had asked to see his master. When told that he was not in, the visitor asked when he would return, and when told it would probably not be until later that evening, he had walked off angrily. The gatekeeper also notes that following the fight between his master and the master's wife, Chang had left the house for a banquet.

Pao then goes back home. Huo soon joins him and informs him that the widow's brother confirms that she had often socialized with several girlfriends and that her husband

had once proposed to her that he take a concubine. However, his opposition was so intense that Chang dared not undertake it. At this point the police telephone to inform Huo that at 11:45 the previous night a policeman had observed a man coming out of Chang's house. However, since it had been ascertained that Chang was murdered at 11:30, the man seen could not have been the killer. The coroner then telephones Huo to report that the wine in the spittoon contained arsenic but that there were no traces of poison in the teapot.

Chief detective Yao appears at Huo's home and reports that the dead man had indeed gone to the banquet the invitation to which they had earlier discovered, but had left soon after arriving without having consumed anything. Huo concludes that the murder victim must have gone elsewhere to drink. Yao adds that the anonymous letter earlier discovered was in Chang Yu-kang's own hand and that Chang himself must have written the letter accusing his wife of adultery.

Huo Sang and Pao Lang now set out in search of a missing servant in the Chang household. They learn that the servant had left the Chang house the previous day to visit his mother who was quite ill, had returned to the Changs', and had again left. The servant was extremely poor and, given the condition of his mother, had a strong motive to steal the missing 50,000 yuan.

Huo and Pao fail to find the servant and again return home. At that point they discover that the police have found a common fruit knife lying next to a garbage can in an alley near the Chang home.

Again the doctor phones, this time to inform Huo that he knows the name of the murderer and is coming over immediately to tell Huo. When he arrives he shows Huo and Pao a piece of paper which had been found in the pocket of the dead man's trousers. On it was written "If I am poisoned, the poisoner is definitely Ku Tzu-hsiang." to which was attached an address. The handwriting of the note was undoubtedly that of the murder victim. The coroner supports Huo's earlier guess that Chang Yu-kang had died by poison and that he was already dead when stabbed.

Huo Sang and Pao Lang then go to interview Ku Tzu-hsiang whose home is located in the French Quarter, a section of the city with which Huo is unfamiliar. They learn that the man had been hired as a broker to acquire a concubine for Chang. Huo believes Ku when he says that Chang had threatened to get him in trouble with the police upon learning that he had failed to secure a suitable woman.

Huo and Pao then return to the Chang residence. To Pao's puzzlement, they stay outside the wall, peer into the house, and then return home.

Later that evening, the gatekeeper arrives with a message written by the sister of the murdered man. The note informs Huo: "The murderer is already apprehended. Please come quickly." Huo and Pao also learn at this point that the missing servant has returned to the Chang house. On hurrying there, they enter the study only to hear the younger sister's confession to the murder. She is prepared to give a full explanation of how she killed her brother who, we now learn, is not her natural brother but an adopted brother. Huo, however, had already deduced that she was the murderess and provides the details of the killing.

She refuses to tell them the reason for the murder but hands Huo a letter and then collapses into a chair. Huo gets someone to call for an ambulance upon discovering that she has taken poison. The letter is in fact a suicide note written by the murder victim's wife and describes what a truly hateful person Chang was. He had lured her (Yu-kang's wife) into gambling dens for the purpose of incurring large debts, thus forcing her to steal from her own mother. It was only through the younger sister's murder of her brother that Chang's wife, now freed from her husband, did not carry out her plan to kill herself.

Appendix B

PLOT SUMMARY OF "EIGHTY-FOUR"

The story begins on a rainy day when Pao Lang and Huo Lang are discussing ways of providing relief for disaster victims and complaining about the speculative hoarding of wicked businessmen, who know only how to pursue their own private ends and who care nothing for the welfare of others.

Pao then returns to his own home and, to his surprise and worry, discovers that his wife is absent. After questioning his servant, he learns that his wife had earlier gone to see her mother. While waiting for her return, he hears footsteps outside his study. Thinking that his wife has come back, Pao calls out to her. He soon realizes that he is mistaken and that the woman whom he has heard outside his door is someone unknown to him. When Pao opens the door to admit the person he thinks is his wife, the stranger enters his house, closes the door behind her, and locks it. She then apologizes to Pao and requests that he turn off all his house lights. Outside, they hear footsteps and the voices of several men. The woman then thanks Pao by name. However, she refuses to reply to any of Pao's questions, but only mutters "eighty-four" and then leaves in great distress. Pao's wife arrives just as the girl leaves and Mrs. Pao asks her husband who the strange woman is. Pao of course cannot supply a name and attempts to dispel his wife's suspicions that he has been meeting another woman without her knowledge.

The next day, with Huo Sang's helpful advice, Pao is able to track down the woman's reference to "eighty-four," which, he finds, is an address of a large western-style

house close by. Pao discovers that the house belongs to a comprador named Yuan and, while observing the house, sees a man drive away in a chauffeured car accompanied by bodyguards.

Pao cannot contact Huo because he has been away the whole day. However, that same evening Pao again determines to spy on the house, this time from a nearby tree. As he is about to climb up, Huo, who is disguised as a rickshaw driver, prevents him from doing so. Later Pao learns that Huo had observed someone climbing the same tree just a few minutes previously. At this point, they hear a gunshot. Huo orders Pao to return home and Huo himself goes off in another direction. On his way home Pao could hear gunshots behind him and then an explosion.

The next day Pao reads in the newspaper that the master of "eighty-four," a compador, was killed and his bodyguard injured. In addition, an unlicensed prostitute was also hurt. The murder victim's assassin was also seriously injured, having been shot by one of the murdered man's bodyguards. Pao goes over to Huo's house where Huo explains, in connection with the events of the previous evening, that a group of zealous youths from Tientsin had tried to exhort unscrupulous profiteers to change their habits and that when their peaceful attempts had failed, had resorted to more drastic tactics. And the mysterious girl who had earlier entered Pao's house was one of the gang.

The following day's newspaper provides Pao with further news. Pao reads that the group opposed to profiteering had issued a declaration about their motives for assassinating the man at "eighty-four." The manifesto confirms Huo's earlier explanation and adds that the assassin, who had been injured in the attack, was a national hero. He

was a twenty-six-year-old-middle-school-graduate who had successfully killed the comprador, who was revealed as having illegally hoarded 9000 *dan*s of rice. The young assassin had died earlier that evening without leaving a confession.

Three days later Pao receives a letter from the mysterious girl whom he had found on his doorstep. She explained that on the night they met, she was armed with a handgun and had planned to sneak into the comprador's home to assassinate him. However, she discovered that the police were searching pedestrians and, since she was carrying a gun, she was frightened of being stopped and searched. When the police had noticed her in the area, she was unsure of what to do but fortunately caught sight of Pao Lang, whom she recognized.